

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK
GOVERNOR



JOHN WALSH
LT. GOVERNOR

March 28, 2013

The Honorable Mark Blasdel
Speaker of the House
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

The Honorable Jeff Essmann
President of the Senate
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Speaker Blasdel and President Essmann:

In accordance with the power vested in me as Governor by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Montana, I hereby veto House Bill 302 (HB 302), "AN ACT PROHIBITING THE ENFORCEMENT OF A POTENTIAL FEDERAL BAN ON SEMIAUTOMATIC WEAPONS AND LARGE MAGAZINES; PROVIDING PENALTIES; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE."

House Bill 302 puts law enforcement in the position of violating laws they have sworn to uphold. When public safety officers graduate from the Montana Law Enforcement Academy, they take an oath to "enforce or apply all laws and regulations appropriately, courteously, and responsibly" and also to "work in unison with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice." HB 302 would subject our peace officers to criminal sanctions for upholding the oath we ask that they take.

Further, HB 302 is unnecessary. To date, there has been no action in Congress to enact a ban on semiautomatic weapons. Moreover, recent news reports have indicated that a majority of Congress does not support such legislation.

I am and always have been a staunch supporter of our Second Amendment rights. We have a strong tradition in Montana of gun ownership, hunting and participation in shooting sports. I believe that is an important tradition to preserve. As Attorney General, I fought to protect Montanans' right to keep and bear arms, and as Governor, I will not hesitate to stand up to the federal government or anyone else who attempts to infringe on those rights. However, this bill is unnecessary political theater and would not meaningfully protect our Second Amendment rights.

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Because HB 302 is unnecessary and puts law enforcement in a position of potentially violating federal law, I respectfully request that you sustain my veto.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Bullock', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

STEVE BULLOCK
Governor

cc: Legislative Services Division
Secretary of State